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New Faculty Luncheon

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• Good afternoon. Let me add my personal greetings and welcome to each of you. If you leave today's event with a single message, it is simply this--we're all glad you're here and eager to have you not just as part of our academic community but as part of our extended Kalamazoo and Southwest Michigan communities as well. We look forward to seeing you in our neighborhoods and throughout this very special civic infrastructure. This is a town that is dedicated to education, life sciences and human service. You will fit right in.

• This is a place where people stay and build their academic and personal lives. It's a place that invites your engagement and total immersion in the life of this University and this community. As a matter of fact, we are celebrating this month, the 50th service anniversary of one of our faculty members (Laurel Grotzinger). Three years ago one of our most celebrated and prolific faculty members (Paul Maier) retired after 54 years at WMU--years spent building a spectacular academic career and a rich community life.

That is the kind of career and community life I wish for each of you.

• You are joining our community at what can only be described as a period of major change. Yesterday, we welcomed the inaugural class of the Western Michigan University Homer Stryker M.D. School of Medicine to our community. The Class of 2018 is made up of 54 students from 14 states and 35 colleges and universities.

• Last week, we announced a formal affiliation that has led to the Western Michigan University Thomas M. Cooley Law School. The development means that first year law classes will be held here on our main campus as early as next fall.
• Last year at this time, this was a public research university with seven degree-granting colleges. Now we are one of fewer than 90 American universities whose name graces both a medical school and a law school--two private professional schools affiliated with a public institution. We're evolving and open to new ideas wherever we find them, because those new ideas lead to new opportunities for our faculty and our students. Be ready to share your good ideas as well. Who knows where they might lead us next.

Welcome, and thank you for deciding to become a member of our community. Enjoy yourself this afternoon, and please know that regardless of which college is your academic "home," I'm looking forward to seeing you at events on campus for many years to come.

Welcome.